

What is claimed is:

1. An image forming device comprising:

an upstream-side sheet transport pathway;

a plurality of downstream-side sheet transport
5 pathways that diverge from the upstream-side sheet transport
pathway at a divergence point; and

a pathway switching mechanism that, at the divergence
point, selectively guides sheets transported following the
upstream-side sheet transport pathway to one of the
10 plurality of downstream-side sheet transport pathways, the
pathway switching mechanism including a pair of upstream-
side gate members and a gate member pivoting unit, the pair
of upstream-side gate members including a pair of pivot
shafts and a pair of gates, the pair of pivot shafts being
15 disposed with the sheet transport pathway interposed
therebetween, each of the pair of gates being pivotable
around a corresponding one of the pair of pivot shafts and
extending substantially toward the downstream-side sheet
transport pathways, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting
20 the pair of gates substantially simultaneously and
substantially in the same direction.

2. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1,
wherein the gate member pivoting unit includes:

a drive unit that supplies drive force for driving at
25 least one of the pair of upstream-side gate members to pivot

selectively in a forward direction and a reverse direction;

a drive transmission mechanism that transmits the drive force from the drive unit to the at least one of the pair of upstream-side gate members; and

5 a ganging mechanism that gangs pivoting movement of the at least one of the pair of upstream-side gate members with the other of the pair of upstream-side gate members.

3. The image forming device as claimed in claim 2, wherein the pathway switching mechanism further includes a downstream-side gate member, the downstream-side gate member
10 having a downstream-side pivot shaft and a downstream-side gate, the downstream-side pivot shaft being positioned directly upstream from the plurality of downstream-side sheet transport pathways and downstream from the divergence
15 point, the downstream-side gate being pivotable around the downstream-side pivot shaft and extending substantially toward the upstream-side sheet transport pathway, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting the downstream-side gate and the pair of upstream-side gates in the same direction.

20 4. The image forming device as claimed in claim 3, wherein the drive transmission mechanism includes a first drive transmission mechanism that transmits drive force from the drive unit to the downstream-side gate and pivots the downstream-side gate in a selected one of opposite
25 directions.

5. The image forming device as claimed in claim 4,
wherein the drive transmission unit further includes a
second drive transmission mechanism that connects the
downstream-side gate to one of the pair of upstream-side
gate members to transmit pivoting movement of the
downstream-side gate to the one of the pair of upstream-side
gate members.

6. The image forming device as claimed in claim 5,
further comprising:

a main casing; and

a plurality of sheet guides that are attached to the
main casing and that are disposed in opposition with each
other with the upstream-side sheet transport pathway defined
therebetween, at least one of the plurality of sheet guides
being at least one of attachable/detachable and
openable/closable with respect to the main casing and at
least partially defining the upstream-side sheet transport
pathway, one gate member of the pair of upstream-side gate
members being assembled to the at least one of the plurality
of sheet guides that is at least one of
attachable/detachable and openable/closable;

wherein the ganging mechanism includes:

an urging member that is interposed between the at
least one of the plurality of sheet guides and another of
the pair of upstream-side gate members and that urges the

other of the pair of upstream-side gate members toward the one of the pair of upstream-side gate members; and

an abutment member for maintaining a gap between the pair of upstream-side gate members, the abutment member being fixed to the one of the upstream-side gates at a position that is between the pair of upstream-side gate members and that is separated from a surface of the one of the upstream-side gates along which sheets are transported.

7. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a main casing; and

a plurality of sheet guides that are attached to the main casing and that are disposed in opposition with each other with the upstream-side sheet transport pathway defined therebetween, at least one of the plurality of sheet guides being at least one of attachable/detachable and openable/closable with respect to the main casing and at least partially defining the upstream-side sheet transport pathway, one gate member of the pair of upstream-side gate members being assembled to the at least one of the plurality of sheet guides that is at least one of attachable/detachable and openable/closable.

8. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the pathway switching mechanism further includes a downstream-side gate member, the downstream-side gate member

having a downstream-side pivot shaft and a downstream-side gate, the downstream-side pivot shaft being positioned directly upstream from the plurality of downstream-side sheet transport pathways and downstream from the divergence point, the downstream-side gate being pivotable around the downstream-side pivot shaft and extending substantially toward the upstream-side sheet transport pathway, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting the downstream-side gate and the pair of upstream-side gates in the same direction.

9. The image forming device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a main casing; and

a plurality of sheet guides that are attached to the main casing and that are disposed in opposition with each other with the upstream-side sheet transport pathway defined therebetween, the gate member pivoting unit pivoting the downstream gate only into at least a first pivot posture and a second pivot posture, a space sufficiently large for a sheet to pass through being opened between the downstream gate and one of the sheet guides while the downstream gate is in the first pivot posture and between the downstream gate and another of the sheet guides while the downstream gate is in the second pivot posture, the downstream gate being in a non-intersecting, non-abutting condition with the sheet guides in regardless of pivot posture.